

Boating & Fishing

update '07



State Senator

John Pappageorge

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Dear Friend:

With over 11,000 inland lakes, thousands of miles of rivers and streams, and shoreline on four of the five Great Lakes, there's no better place to spend a Michigan summer than on the water! Fun and adventure are close at hand - whether you love to boat, fish, sail, canoe, kayak, ski or just enjoy nature.

Before you and your family head to the shore, I wanted to send along some information of interest to boaters and anglers. Along with a legislative report, this newsletter provides safety tips, a helpful resource guide and news on some potential threats to our water resources. I hope you find it informative.

As always, your comments and suggestions on ways to preserve Michigan's outdoor heritage are most welcome. I look forward to hearing from you. Have a great summer on the water!

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature of John Pappageorge in black ink.

John Pappageorge
State Senator
13th District





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New THREAT to fish in Great Lakes

A new contagious disease, Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) virus, is on the move in the Great Lakes. VHS has already caused fish mortalities in Lakes St. Clair, Erie, Ontario and Huron, and the Wisconsin DNR recently reported that VHS has spread into Lake Michigan. Officials have also confirmed the virus has moved inland as a large fish die-off in Budd Lake in Clare County was determined to be the result of a VHS outbreak. The virus does not affect humans in any way.

To help slow the spread of the disease and protect the state's fish hatcheries, the DNR has put a one-year moratorium on walleye, northern pike and muskellunge production and stocking. In addition, the DNR has issued a draft order restricting live bait. If approved by the Natural Resources Commission, the new rules would become effective June 28.

Anglers can keep up-to-date on the live bait restrictions, or report sick fish or fish kill at www.michigan.gov/dnr-fishing. Signs of VHS to look for include: hemorrhaging in the skin, multiple hemorrhages on the liver, spleen or intestines, or hemorrhages on the swim bladder.

Officials suspect the disease entered Michigan waters from the Maritime Region of Canada, likely in the discharge of infected ballast water from cargo ships.

2007 Michigan Family Fish Consumption Guide available

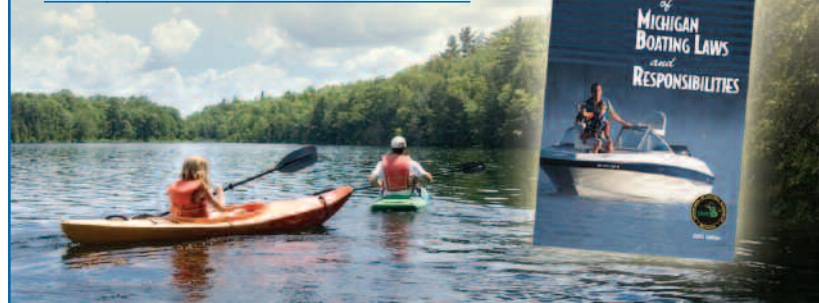
Eating fish has many health benefits. However, there may be health risks from chemical contaminants found in some fish if those fish are eaten too often. *The Michigan Family Fish Consumption Guide* provides advice by water body, fish species, and fish length, as well as tips for cooking and cleaning fish. Access the guide at www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic - click on Michigan Fish Advisory. Other brochures are available at the site, including *Avoid Mercury in Fish and Seafood: Shopping and Restaurant Guide*.

SAFE BOATING – rules on the water

- 1. Wear Your Life Jacket.** Always. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that 87 percent of those who drown while boating are not wearing a life jacket. The number one precaution boaters can take to stay safe on the water is to wear a life preserver.
- 2. Stay Sober.** It is illegal to operate a boat or personal watercraft under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Alcohol is a factor in one third of all recreational boating fatalities.
- 3. Maintain a Safe Speed and Stay Alert.** Most boating accidents are caused by operator errors. Be ready for other boats, swimmers, skiers or shallow waters.
- 4. Take a Boating Safety Course.** Know the rules and always boat with safety in mind.
- 5. Keep your Boat in Safe Working Order.** Make sure your craft meets state and federal requirements and is properly equipped. Request a Vessel Safety Check at: www.vesselsafetycheck.org.
- 6. File a Float Plan.** Let someone on shore know where you're going and when you plan to return.

Check the Handbook of Michigan Boating Laws and Responsibilities to stay on top of Michigan boating rules and regulations. Access it online at

www.boat-ed.com/mi/handbook/.





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Michigan CONSERVATION Week

Senator Pappageorge supports Michigan Conservation Week

This spring, Senate Republicans ushered in a new celebration – Michigan Conservation Week. The event opened on Earth Day on April 22 and closed on May 1. Many of the activities during the week recognized Michigan's fishing and hunting heritage, and the important role sportsmen and women have in conserving the natural resources of our state now and for future generations.

The event highlighted new legislation supporting outdoor sports, including bills that protect Michigan residents' right to lawfully fish and hunt, and add new penalties for poaching. Another bill would allow the DNR to offer gift certificates redeemable for items such as: fishing licenses, state park motor vehicle permits, mooring fees, and camping fees. Find out more at www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/conservation.

Find the perfect site

With access to four of the five Great Lakes and thousands of inland lakes, there are plenty of water resources to discover in Michigan. Boaters can launch their adventures from over 1,300 public boating access sites and over 90 public harbors and marinas. Visit the Michigan Recreational Boating Information System web site at www.mcgi.state.mi.us/MRBIS/ to plan your next outing. Search by distance, body of water, county, even by fish species! Facility and site information include amenities, fees, and rules. Some harbor sites include a link to online reservations.

Boaters and anglers can help control ANS

Aquatic nuisance species (ANS) are the number one threat facing Michigan waters. More than 180 non-native pests, like zebra mussels and the round goby, endanger the native fish and plant populations so vital to recreational fishing. While most have arrived in the Great Lakes basin through the dumping of ballast water from ocean going vessels, boaters and anglers can help prevent further spread of fish diseases and other aquatic nuisance species by taking these precautions:

- ⚓ Thoroughly clean boats, trailers, nets and other equipment with a light bleach solution.
- ⚓ After cleaning, allow boats and equipment to dry in the sun for 4 to 6 hours.
- ⚓ Do not release live bait into any water body.
- ⚓ Do not move fish from one body of water to another.
- ⚓ Empty live wells and bilges when leaving the water to avoid transferring any of that water elsewhere.

Pappageorge urges action to keep Asian Carp out of the Great Lakes

The Senate recently pressed for federal action to protect the Great Lakes from another potentially dangerous, and more physically imposing threat - the Asian Carp. Senate Resolution 15, adopted on April 17, urges the completion of a permanent barrier to keep two species of Asian carp (silver and bighead) out of the Great Lakes. Currently, a temporary barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal is all that is keeping them out of Lake Michigan.

Asian carp are ravenous feeders that compete with native fish and wildlife for food. In some of the pools along the Mississippi River, these carp species make up 90 percent of the total fish population. In addition, the leaping silver carp is a particular hazard to recreational boaters, causing injury and property damage.



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PERSONAL WATERCRAFT – fun but serious boating

With their speed, wave jumping capacity and sporty looks, personal watercraft (PWC) are a favorite for fun on the water. Yet what makes them exciting in the first place can also make them dangerous. It's important to remember that personal watercraft are not toys but high performance recreational boats. The U.S. Coast Guard offers these safety tips:

- Always attach engine shut-off lanyard.
- Never allow passengers to ride in front of the operator.
- Always stay clear of intake grate and water jet.
- Scan constantly for people, fixed objects and other watercraft.
- Be educated. Many PWC operators do not have formal training.

Michigan has special rules for PWC operators, including minimum age and life jacket requirements, boating safety certification, safe operating practices and more. Whether you rent or own a personal watercraft, make sure you know the law. Find out more in the boating handbook at www.boat-ed.com/mi/handbook.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

BOATING

Handbook of Michigan Boating Laws and Responsibilities:

www.boat-ed.com/mi/handbook/

Harbor Reservations:

Call 1-800-447-2757

www.midnrreservations.com/index.cfm

Boating Access Sites:

www.mcgi.state.mi.us/MRBIS/

Boating Safety Classes:

www.dnr.state.mi.us/recnsearch/

FISHING

2006-2008 Michigan Fishing Guide:

<http://michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10364-137191--,00.html>

DNR Fisheries Division

517-373-1280

Weekly Fishing Report:

Call 1-517-373-0908

<http://michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10364-34956--,00.html>

Buy a Fishing License online:

www.mdnr-elicense.com/welcome.asp

Michigan Master Angler State Records:

www.michigandnr.com/MASTERANGLER/

Report a Poacher (RAP) Hotline:

1-800-292-7800